| Georgia Archives: Case Studies in Record Keeping | Implementing an Electronic Records Management Application in a State Agency: A Brief Case Study |

Executive Summary

Grant project staff deployed a records management software package at the State Board of Pardons and Paroles.

- **Goal:**
  To gain greater control of and access to the electronic records of the state of Georgia.

- **Solution:**
  Implementation of Tower Software's TRIM Context records management application.

- **Timetable for planning and implementing the project:**
  Installation and configuration of software on servers and user desktops took a total of five days.

- **Costs of project:**
  10 licenses, installation and training: $23,941 purchased with grant funds. 7 additional licenses have been purchased with agency funds.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2005, the Georgia Archives received a National Historical Publications and Records Commission grant to support the creation of new policies, procedures, and processes for the online transfer of permanent electronic records to our institution. As part of that grant, we employed a commercial-off-the-shelf records management software application to facilitate the acquisition of permanent items from the clemency case files of Georgia's State Board of Pardons and Paroles, our grant partner.

Installation of a records management software application would streamline and improve business processes at Pardons and Paroles. Installation of such an application would also aid in responding to requests made under the Georgia Open Records Act. Content indexing and other advanced search capabilities offered by records management software ease the process of finding specific records, including e-mail.

At the time of the award the Archives had already deployed an records management software application: Tower Software's TRIM Context. TRIM is fully compliant with DoD 5015.2, the Department of Defense's—and the State of Georgia's—formal standard for records management applications and, as such, was deemed appropriate for use at the Board of Pardons and Paroles.

Grant project staff selected a single record series, the Felony and Misdemeanor Case File, as the initial focus of the project. The case file was chosen because of the sheer volume of records currently accumulated, the difficulty of purging such files of unwanted material, and the lack of standard metadata. It was expected that the use of the TRIM application would facilitate solutions to these problems and experience with this series would provide insight into problems that might be encountered in subsequent series.

PREPARATION

Prior to the installation of TRIM, representatives of the Archives and the Board of Pardons and Paroles met to consider the necessity of changes to existing records retention schedules. The Felony and Misdemeanor Case Files is currently held for twenty years and includes a number of distinct documents. Over the past year, Board personnel have been introducing more electronic elements into what is now a hybrid paper-electronic recordkeeping system. Archives personnel were interested in incorporating records management practices into the existing workflow. The introduction of records management software allows the creation of separate record types and individual retention periods for each document or subset of documents within the case file. Formal identification of the various documents during a series of meetings facilitated the creation of separate TRIM record types, as well as new agency specific retention schedules.

REQUIREMENTS AND SETUP

TRIM is fairly straightforward to set up. TRIM features a multi-tier server-client architecture. A TRIM Client application must be installed on each licensed user's desktop, and Workgroup, Synchronization, and Event Server applications are installed on agency servers. TRIM services communicate with each other through Microsoft's Distributed Component Object Model (DCOM). A primary database stores all record metadata. TRIM supports MS SQL Server, Oracle, Sybase, and DB2. Oracle was chosen for this specific implementation. TRIM relies on Microsoft Data Access Components (MDAC) for database connectivity, and does not require desktop ODBC configuration. Records themselves may be stored in a file system directory, an FTP store, or a third party object store such as IBM's Content Manager. Records were placed in the file system directory for the purposes of this installation.

Grant project staff and a Tower representative completed installation and initial configuration of the TRIM Context software in five days. The two major activities were a database migration and the configuration of the TRIM software.

The database migration involved the transfer of case file names and numbers from the Lotus Notes application previously providing records access. For this task we used the TRIMPort file import/export utility included in the software package. Over a period of two days, data was transferred from a comma-delimited file to the Oracle database used to hold the TRIM Context dataset.

TRIM configuration was carried out concurrently with the data import. Users were assigned accounts and security levels, and client software was installed on designated agency machines. Record types were created to describe the records currently in use in the department. Document queues were created to hold images scanned from paper records but not yet placed into the TRIM system.

TRAINING

A TRIM representative spent three days providing training to PAP and Archives staff. The first day of training was reserved for end-users; the second and third days were devoted to training for TRIM administrators. These training sessions will be augmented by TRIM users' ongoing familiarization with the software package.

Benefits of Implementation

- **Accountability**
  Reducing risk by identifying accounting for the actions of users in your agency

- **Compliance**
  Helping your organization to retain and quickly retrieve your official records

- **Productivity**
  Saving time and money by streamlining business processes

- **Efficiency**
  Preventing unnecessary duplication of efforts by centralizing records access and control

LESSONS LEARNED

The selection of a proven software solution already in use at the Georgia Archives made the process of installation and configuration considerably less difficult than might have been expected. Indeed, the implementation of TRIM at the State Board of Pardons and Paroles was largely uneventful. This TRIM installation is expected to expand to other records and record types once users become comfortable with the system as applied to the felony and misdemeanor case files. The project has also heightened interest in records management applications in other government agencies, an encouraging development that bodes well for the future of electronic records management in Georgia state and local government.